

**Abstract**

A system for efficiently storing application data which allows a practically infinite number of physically separate storage devices to be used as archival storage means by one or more application programs. Application data is organized among the devices such that files with a similar expiry date (that is the date beyond which the files are no longer required to be archived) are grouped together on the same physical device, such that after the expiry date the device used for such files may be erased and re-used. Optionally, files with particular content-types may be grouped on the same physical device, or among physical devices of the same type.